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MAINTAINING STABILITY IN NORTHEAST ASIA
THROUGHOUT THE REUNIFICATION OF KOREA

by

Chuji Ando, Major, Japan Air Self-Defense Force

A Research Report Submitted to the Faculty

In Partial Fulfillment of the Graduation Requirements

Advisor: Wing Commander James B. Klein, Royal Air Force

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Preface

Through the series of active discussions in my seminar of the Air Command and Staff College (ACSC) AY2000, I have been exposed to some difficult questions regarding my country and the Japan Self-Defense Forces. One of them really struck me; “Will Japan be happy with the reunification of Korea?” At first, I thought it would be nothing but great to terminate the high tension which was caused by suspicions of nuclear weapons and the proven ballistic missiles of North Korea, through reunification led by South Korea. Then as a joke my mind went on to think, “Japan Self-Defense Forces must find another threat to justify asking for a defense budget, - maybe China.” At that moment, the dreadful thought occurred to me that South Korea or a reunified Korea might think Japan as a potential enemy, once they lose the immediate enemy in the north. It is evident for me that Japan will not consider a reunified Korea as a potential enemy, as long as it maintains democracy and capitalism, and disarms the nuclear arsenal in the north. “Democracies never fight each other.” However, I am not sure if a reunified Korea would think in the same way, because I know there is still severe rivalry and animosity in Korea based on bad memories toward Japan. There is a territorial dispute over Takeshima (Tokdo) Island, and a dispute over an exclusive fishery zone. As a military officer, I am convinced that Japan must never become a potential enemy of a reunified Korea.

The objective of my research paper is to expose as many mid-career officers in the Japan Air Self-Defense Force and the US Air Force to the issue and prepare them before the expected

reunification of Korea takes place, in order to make it a favorable one to democratic Western allies.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to my seminar mates, international officers especially from Asian countries, and course instructors of ACSC AY2000 for offering me great advice. Above all, I would like to convey my special thanks to Wing Commander James B. Klein, RAF for his assistance and kind support as a Faculty Research Advisor and an assistant commander of my International Officer School, ACSC preparatory course, AY1999.

Abstract

Although the Cold War is considered to have terminated in the early 1990s, there is a region where the legacy of the Cold War is still remaining; the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) or North Korea is a country which maintains a unique Communism and isolation policy. While North Korea is trying hard to grasp the initiative over the Korean Peninsula using the nuclear development card, its poorly led economy has fallen into a desperate state; furthermore, it has lost the support of the Soviet Union. North Korea is now considered to be on the eve of collapse.

For more than 50 years, reunification of Korea has been an issue desired by both Koreas but one that has never been realized due to totally different ideologies. However, the possible collapse of North Korea has made the possibility of reunification more likely than at any other time in the past. For the countries which are experiencing tough negotiations to keep North Korea away from the proliferation of nuclear weapons, reunification of Korea led by the Republic of Korea (ROK) or South Korea is likely to be thought of as a preferred end-state in this region.

However, we must know that reunification of Korea will not solve all the destabilizing conditions in Northeast Asia, but will create another struggle for the balance of power in this region between China, Russia, Japan, the US and a reunified Korea. And it is likely that possible outcomes after reunification could be unfavorable ones for Japan or the United States (US).

China and a reunified Korea, both great powers in Northeast Asia, would not accept any excessive commitment in this region by Japan or the US.

In order to avoid such outcomes, both Japan and the US must articulate their national strategy to control the outcomes through the reunification process. Preventing reunification and keeping the status quo may be one option for them. However, they should not be preoccupied with the current non-proliferation issue too much, because the more the reunification is delayed, the higher the cost of it will get, and the more North Koreans will die of hunger.

The remaining time is so limited for the possible reunification of Korea, and it is time for Japan and the US to cooperate with each other to ensure a favorable end-state through the reunification to keep the peace, stability, economic prosperity, democracy and human rights in this region. The end-state will be realized by minimizing unfavorable outcomes: Japan-Korea confrontation, friction with China and Russia, domestic disorder in a reunified Korea, and controversy over the US forces in Korea.

To gather relevant information, I widely referred to books, official documents, research papers, and articles in periodicals, databases, and on Internet, which are written and published in Japan, South Korea and the US. This paper covers a brief history and geographical bottom line that has caused lasting frictions on the Korean Peninsula in the first introductory chapter, then introduces main state actors and multilateral frame-works that have influence on the strategic environment in Northeast Asia in the next chapter. In chapter 3, my paper discusses four possible futures of North Korea to advocate a probable reunification led by South Korea. Then, chapter 4 foresees the possible outcome of reunification, which contains both pros and cons for reunification. Finally in chapter 5, my paper introduces possible political and military courses of action for Japan and the US, which will realize a preferable end-state after reunification.

Part 1

Introduction

The day will inevitably come ... when Korea will be whole again.

— Former President George Bush, 1992

Korea was divided into two separate states with different ideologies, when the occupation by Imperial Japan terminated in 1945. While the Republic of Korea (ROK) or South Korea has become one of the rising “Asian Tigers” and a recent member of Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) or North Korea is merely one of the failed states, whose autocratic regime is incapable of offering the nation any sufficient service other than an unsuitably large and destabilizing military force. North Korea’s aggressive policy has threatened not only South Korea and the whole of Northeast Asia, but also worldwide security by proliferating weapons of mass destruction (WMD) to other rogue countries and terrorists. On the other hand, its misled domestic policy has pushed North Korea to the eve of collapse, and this makes the probability of reunification of Korea more likely than at any other time in post-WWII history.

So far, the international community has mainly focused on how it can reduce the threat derived from North Korea’s aggressive policy¹; the reunification of Korea led by South Korea is considered to be the most effective and favorable measure to attain its goal. However, difficulty in handling current North Korean issues and vague visibility toward resolution are likely to make most people misunderstand reunification of Korea as if it was the final goal. Therefore, very few

governments seem to be foreseeing the situation after reunification. However, the strategic² environment after reunification would still be unstable due to several factors: a temporary decline of Korean power, possible withdrawal of the US forces from Korea, reactions by neighboring states to fill an emerging power vacuum, and an eventual rise of a reunified Korea as a major power in Northeast Asia. It is imperative for the international community to prepare for the post-reunification environment to maintain stability in Northeast Asia. In particular, Japan and the US – the states responsible for Korean division about half a century ago – have to positively commit themselves to forming a stable and peaceful state on the peninsula – a state with democracy, open market economy, and moderate non-nuclear military.

In my paper, I mostly referred to books, research papers, databases, and official documents written and published in the US, South Korea and Japan to gather relevant facts and perspectives. Then I tried to foresee the possible implications in the future to develop favorable courses of action for Japan and the US. A prerequisite in my paper is that Japan and the US will maintain their tight relationships based on the Japan-US Security Treaty, which was reaffirmed as the foundation for maintaining the stability and prosperity of the region in the “Japan-US Joint Declaration on Security” issued in April 1996.

Historical Outline Regarding the Korean Peninsula

Korea has always been a small nation surrounded by giants who variably exhibited indifference, opportunism, and antagonism.³ Korea is referred to by Western society as the “Hermit Kingdom” which has an obstinate hostility toward foreign powers. If one looks at the history, it might be clear why Korea has such hostility and isolationism.

¹ Paul Bracken, “How to Think about Korean Unification”, (Orbis, Summer98, Vol.42 Issue 3, p409, 14p); Academic Search Elite, on-line, EBISCOhost, 7 January 2000.

² Ibid

Sovereign Nation-state

Korea has its own history from before Christ, and its unitary existence starts from the 7th century. Korea had requisites of nationhood earlier than European states did: political unity, a common language, ethnic homogeneity, and boundaries. Korea was one of the rare states where ethnic and linguistic unity coincided exactly within its boundaries, as they did in Japan. The Yi Dynasty had reigned in Korea for five centuries from 1392. Korea had been a model tributary state and at the same time an important ally of China. Korea learned a lot from China, imported Confucian Statecraft, and regarded Chinese Emperors as big brothers of Korean Kings.

Under Japanese Occupation

Just as China and Japan opened their countries to the Western imperials, the Yi Dynasty finally opened Korea in 1876, and was forced to sign a western style unequal mutual treaty between Japan. The Yi Dynasty was banished soon after that, unable to withstand the technically advanced imperial powers with strong armies. In 1894 and 1904, Korea was involved in the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese War, and it was the end of Korean autonomy but the beginning of the fate as a shuttlecock batted around by the great powers. In 1905, Japan, a victor of those wars, established a protectorate over Korea, then seized the peninsula by annexing Korea in 1910. Japan occupied Korea for 35 years until its defeat in the Pacific War in 1945.

Divided Nations

Although Korea was freed from Imperial Japan's occupation, Korea was divided into two parts in 1948 as a result of a power game between the US and the Soviet Union. The decision to divide Korea at the 38th parallel was never been consulted Korea, Britain or China, even though

³ Ibid.

the latter two states were supposed to be the members of the “trusteeship.” It was a framework, suggested by Franklin D. Roosevelt at the Yalta Conference, to monitor the reconstruction of Korea for two to three decades by the four victor nations. In 1950, an invasion from the North triggered the Korean War. Although the war was thought of as a proxy war between the US and the Soviet Union, North Korea was strongly helped by China, not by the Soviet Union, to push the UN (virtually the US) force back south to the 38th parallel. The following stalemate meant neither side could unify the other by force. Then in 1953, an armistice was signed and the 38th parallel became the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), and the hot Korean War became a cold war. Korea has been divided for 55 years.

Geopolitical Bottom Line of the Korean Peninsula

The Korean Peninsula is merely a small peninsula located on the east part of the Eurasian Continent. (See Figure 1.) However, the peninsula has significant geopolitical importance, because it is surrounded by several major states: Russia, China, Japan and the US. Historically, the Korean Peninsula was a bridge between the continental countries and an insular Japan, which had imported Buddhism, Confucianism, literature, culture, politics etc. from the Continent. At the same time, it was a “dagger” pointed at the flank of Japan, bridgehead to Manchuria for Imperial Japan, a gateway to the warm water for Expansionist Russia, and a stronghold for the US to stop the expansion of Communism. Moreover, continuing evolution of long-range Taepo-Dong missile by North Korea will enable it to become a state which can hit CONUS directly from its own land. Now, isolated North Korea is in effect as a buffer zone between the West and the East, namely between the US Force Korea (USFK) and China or Russia, in Northeast Asia, where it seems the Cold War is not obsolete even now.

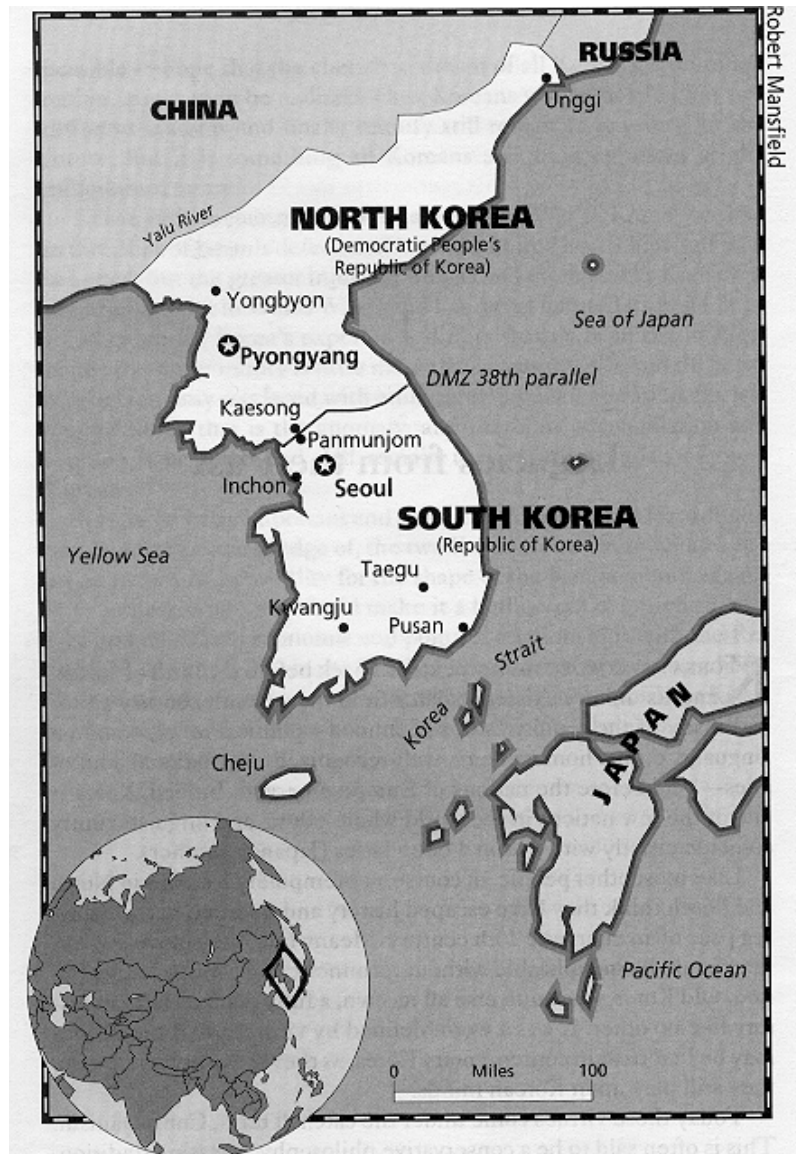


Figure 1. Map of Korean Peninsula

Source: *Divided Korea: United Future?* , (Bruce Cumings: Foreign Policy Association, 1995)

Part 2

The Strategic Environment in Northeast Asia

Northeast Asia is the region where five of the world's largest armed forces exist. China has the world's largest army and airforce, while North and South Korea have the second and fourth armies respectively. Although they only have a part of their armed forces permanently stationed in this region, Russia and the US have robust capabilities to deploy large forces to this region if needed. Also, even though the number shown in Table 1 is moderate, Japan has highly modernized forces to defend its territory. Just as in Europe, the probability of the US-Russian war has been decreased after the end of the Cold War, however, there are still medium-high tensions derived from territorial disputes and Communism still remaining in this area. And so far, there is no sound regional framework to promote peace and stability in Northeast Asia.

In particular, the Korean Peninsula has a significant geopolitical importance for most states in Northeast Asia, as a Korean historian exaggerates this fact by saying, "Korea has been challenged more than 900 times by invasions in the past."⁴ Although the Korean Peninsula became free from the threat of other countries after the end of WWII, there emerged a long and intense confrontation between two divided Koreas. Thus, the Korean Peninsula is sometimes expressed as a "Powder Keg."⁵ This part of the paper will review the basic national interests and contributions of the main state actors to the strategic environment of Northeast Asia, and will also review several multilateral frameworks, which have or will have an influence on the strategic environment of the region.

⁴ Bruce Cumings, *Divided Korea: United Future?* (Foreign Policy Association, 1995), 14.

⁵ Amos A. Jordan, *Korean Unification* (Center for Strategic Studies and International Studies, 1993), 72.

Table 1. Military Postures in Northeast Asia (approximation)

<i>Name of Country (region)</i>	<i>Ground Forces (1,000 persons)</i>	<i>Naval Forces (vessels/1,000tons)</i>	<i>Air Forces (combat aircraft)</i>
North Korea	1,000	730 / 100	610
South Korea	560	210 / 140	520
China	2,100	830 / 1,000	4,030
Russia (Far East)	220	420 / 1,100	820
U.S.A. (Far East)	50	60 / 660	360 (incl. carrier a/c)
Japan	150	150 / 370	510

Source: Data on the ground and air forces taken from *Military Balance 1998-99* and on the naval forces from *Jane's Fighting Ships 1998-99* and others.

Main State Actors in Northeast Asia

Although the countries geographically located in Northeast Asia are the two Koreas, Russia, China and Japan, the US should be considered as a main state actor in this region because it has long been committed to this region since it opened Asian countries to the world by its gunboat diplomacy. All these countries have been main state actors who determined and influenced the strategic environment in Northeast Asia.

South Korea: Republic of Korea

Since his inauguration in February 1998, President Kim Dae Jung has promoted democracy and market economy, also advocating the establishment of a future-oriented relationship with Japan, the US, China and Russia. As his highest priority, he is going on a patient engagement policy, also known as the “Sunshine Policy,” toward North Korea, changing its policy from deterrence to reconciliation. South Korea is working hard to open lines of communication and to expand people-to-people contacts in order to increase familiarity and reduce misunderstandings.

South Korea has offered generous economic support to the North, as a separate issue from political deadlock, to further the “Sunshine Policy.” However, it seems that it will be a long time before the outcome of this policy is known, because there is strong opposition by self-respecting North Korea to accept sympathy from the South. For Pyongyang, the inflow of democracy and capitalism through the South can be a lethal weapon, which might be likely to destroy its regime. Basically, South Korea believed that issues on the peninsula should be solved through North-South dialogue, and they reached “Agreement on North-South Reconciliation, Non-Aggression and Exchanges and Cooperation,” and “Joint Declaration of the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula” in 1992. However, North Korea has not followed those agreements and rejected holding bilateral dialogues. Therefore, South Korea is working with the US and China in the Four-Party Talks, as well as coordinating with Japan and Russia. Also, South Korea is striving to gain more support for the “Sunshine Policy” by strengthening comprehensive cooperative ties with the middle powers in Europe and the Third World.⁶

South Korea is at a defensive disadvantage because Seoul, where a quarter of the country’s population is concentrated, is situated very close to the DMZ. Therefore, South Korea has been making constant efforts to modernize its forces, spending 3-4 percent of its GNP on national defense. Also, South Korea accommodates 37,000 US troops under the US-ROK Mutual Defense Treaty. Recently, South Korea has developed a blue water navy and is trying to acquire AWACS to counterbalance the forces of its neighbors in the region, however such movements have been suspended by the economic crisis affecting South Korea since 1997.⁷

⁶ “Direction of Korea’s Foreign Policy for Security in 2000”, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade Home Page*, n.p.; online, Internet, 14 Feb 2000, available from <http://www.mofat.go.kr/web/sec.nsf/>.

⁷ *East Asian Strategic Review 1998-1999* (The National Institute for Defense Studies, 1999), 70.

North Korea: Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Since the death of the charismatic leader, President Kim Il Sung, his son Kim Jong Il has succeeded most of his father's posts. Although the post of the President is still left vacant in honor of the great leader, General Secretary Kim Jong Il is virtually the top leader of North Korea, who controls the military and the Labor Party.

North Korea is described as a remote country because it is still keeping the sense of the Cold War, and its ill considered policy of isolation and self-reliance.⁸ One can observe little exchange between North Korea and the international society both politically and economically. Also it is described as a rogue state with its provocative behaviors toward South Korea, Japan and the US. While it has been supported with food and energy from those countries, several sensational incidents have been made under the direction of Kim Jong Il. His reckless behaviors include military infiltration into South Korean territory using spy submarines in 1996 and 1998, the test-launch of Taepo-Dong missile over Japan in 1998, and intentional confrontations of naval vessels in the Yellow Sea in 1999. Another problematic behavior is the proliferation of missile and nuclear technologies to other rogue states such as Iran, Libya and Pakistan. North Korea is not bound by the international agreements such as the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) - North Korea withdrew from NPT in 1993 – or the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR). Punitive sanctions against North Korea seem achieve nothing but accelerate its weapon sales to other rogue states or terrorists for money.

In spite of South Korea's desire to solve the issues on the peninsula through bilateral dialogues, North Korea is proposing direct negotiations with the US for the establishment of a new peace and security system. North Korea insists its rights are assured by the "Agreed Framework" of 1994 and Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO), while it

evades obligations on those agreements by skillfully playing the “nuclear-card.” The two official agreements between North and South Korea, regarding reconciliation, non-aggression, and denuclearization, have virtually lost their effect. And what was worse was that North Korea tried to emasculate the Korean Armistice Agreement by withdrawing its personnel from the Korean Armistice Committee by 1995, claiming that it “became impossible to maintain the status of the demilitarized zone.”⁹

Now North Korea is considered to be on the eve of collapse, because of a deteriorated economy and a serious shortage of food and energy in those five years. Such a situation has been caused by poor planning, a failure to reform, constant ministerial reshuffles, the technical gap, the short supply of consumer goods, and ambiguous agricultural problems.¹⁰

China

China has the world’s largest armed forces. Although its army is short of firepower and mobility on the whole, China is trying to modernize its forces focusing on the quality instead of the quantity.¹¹ China’s defense expenditure has registered a more than 10 percent increase every year in 11 consecutive years since 1989, and that of 1999 was about 15 percent.¹² This number is conspicuous in the post Cold War world, and it intensifies the instability of the whole of East Asia, where the Cold War still remains.

China is hardly shy about vehemently expressing its views on questions of political geography; Taiwan, Hong Kong and the Spratly Islands are presented as non-negotiable issues of sovereignty. However, China has no claim of sovereignty in the case of Korea, but has every

⁸ Bruce Cumings, *Divided Korea: United Future?* (Foreign Policy Association, 1995), 3.

⁹ *Defense of Japan 1998* (Defense Agency of Japan, 1999), 39.

¹⁰ Amos A. Jordan, *Korean Unification* (Center for Strategic Studies and International Studies, 1993), 38.

¹¹ *Defense of Japan 1998* (Defense Agency of Japan, 1999), 53.

¹² *Nihon no Bouei (Defense of Japan) 1999* (Defense Agency of Japan, 1999), 68.

intention of ensuring that no political or military dangers arise from that quarter.¹³ For China, North Korea has served as a buffer zone separating continental Northeast Asia from the military and economic influence of the maritime powers - the US and Japan. In case Korean reunification were led by South Korea, the US-ROK Mutual Defense Treaty would be applied to the whole territory of a reunified Korea, which would stimulate China because its army would have to stand face to face with the US forces in Korea.

Even though China has recently developed economic cooperation with South Korea, it is still almost the only country which North Korea can count on with little hesitation, and which is allowed to keep a neutral position toward both Koreas. Therefore, the role of China, as a member of the Four-Party Talks, can't be ignored when dealing with the issue of Korean reunification.

Russia

For Russia, the Korean Peninsula with its warm water ports is the gateway to the Pacific. Although Russia and the Soviet Union have exercised significant influence to Korea, it has not shown much interest in North Korea as an ally or comrade after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The reluctance of Russia to continue a relationship with North Korea can be guessed from former President Gorbachev's statement that he regarded the "2 plus 4" as the "2 plus 3 ½," which meant Russia would not commit to Korean issues with 100% effort.¹⁴ Consequently, the "2 plus 4" which was the first regional regime in history for seeking Korean reunification faded away. Now Russia is not a member of the Four-Party Talks, which is currently dealing with the issue of reunification of Korea. However, South Korea, which is now Russia's major trading

¹³ Paul Bracken, "How to Think about Korean Unification", (Orbis, Summer 98, Vol.42 Issue 3, p409, 14p); Academic Search Elite, on-line, EBISCOhost, 7 January 2000.

¹⁴ Amos A. Jordan, *Korean Unification* (Center for Strategic Studies and International Studies, 1993), 2.

partner, seeks to develop a future-oriented partnership with Russia in order to gain a Russian support for its “Sunshine Policy.”

For Russia and China, North Korea’s bold actions which humiliated the US and which they would never dare to do themselves looked outlandish and absurd. The seizure of USS *Pueblo* (US Navy’s reconnaissance ship) in international waters in 1968 and the surface-to-air missile attack against an SR-71 flying outside North Korea’s airspace in 1981 were instances of such activities. Now as the Cold War has terminated, it would be natural for Russia to reconsider its collective security agreement with North Korea. In 1995, Russia presented North Korea with a draft of a new treaty that was to replace the “Soviet-North Korea Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance,” and the new treaty, with less defense and political cooperation, was signed in February 2000.

From the standpoint of North Korea, the Soviet Union was not really a reliable partner because the country which helped North Korea at the moment the United Nations (UN) force almost drove the North Korean force away from the peninsula, was not the Soviet Union but China. This sentiment helped form the unique Communism based on isolationism in North Korea, very different to the Marxism of the Soviet Union.

Japan

Although for years Japan was the biggest trade partner of North Korea, the relationship between the two states has not been normalized until now. Although Japan has been trying to normalize the relationship between North Korea, there were many obstacles to the process. Since Japan has tight relationships with the US, its diplomacy toward North Korea has been linked with the US policy, which is quite sensitive to the suspicious nuclear development of North Korea. Japan and the US had met South Korea’s opposition toward individual

normalization process without coordinating with South Korea until the arrival of President Kim Dae Jung, who encouraged Japan to improve its relations with North Korea. Above all, the normalization talks have come to frequent deadlocks because of North Korea's opposition to the US forces Japan (USFJ), continuance of sanctions, and North Korea claims for reparations for Japanese actions during WWII.

Also, Japan has difficulty in pressing forward with confidence-building measures (CBM), because of unsolved disputes on suspected cases of abduction of Japanese citizens by North Korean agents, and especially because of the threatening missile launch over the Japanese mainland in August 1998. There is much opposition among Japanese society to normalize the relationship between North Korea or lift sanctions. However, the Japanese government has sent several key politicians, such as former Prime Minister Murayama in late 1999, in the hope of conciliating his North Korean counterpart. Also, Japan has offered humanitarian food assistance to North Korea through the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Japan Red Cross Society.

One of the most interesting things about Japanese foreign policy is that it is difficult for the Japanese to discuss their national interests vigorously, even though the Korean Peninsula will affect Japanese interests so directly and dramatically. This tendency derives from an allergy or an over reaction among Japanese to the past expansionism and atrocity of Imperial Japan up to 1945, and considerations of skeptical Asian countries.

The United States

The US has a great responsibility to the issue on the Korean Peninsula, because it drew the 38th parallel, which divided a single nation into two separate states. It maintains USFK with 37,000 military personnel and about 90 active installations, which has served as the UN Command responsible for maintaining the armistice agreement of 1953 after the Korean War.

Since the announcement of the 1993 Bottom-Up Review, the Korean Peninsula has been one of the two major regional contingencies for which the US has had to prepare.

The US reached the “Agreed Framework” with North Korea in 1994, which promised to construct two modern reactors in return for a freeze on the nuclear program, (in particular the graphite-moderated reactors). The Framework also promised eventual inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and the ultimate dismantling and removal of the suspect facilities and materials. Although this agreement has succeeded in delaying the completion of a nuclear weapon by North Korea, it seems that it has allowed North Korea to use the “nuclear-card” to gain concessions from others. The partial lifting of the uninterrupted 50 year-long economic sanctions against North Korea in October 1999, for suspending additional missile launch over Japan, augmented the impression that the US has only “carrots” but no “sticks” against North Korea. The US Congress criticizes the Clinton Administration for giving the largest foreign aid in the Asia-Pacific region to one of the greatest threats against the interests of the US and its allies, since there was no US aid, subsidies or trade given to North Korea up to the very last day of the Bush Administration.

The US forces in South Korea and Japan are an unwelcome presence for North Korea, and it demands the withdrawal of those US forces at the table of most talks and dialogues, at which the participants hardly reach any agreements. Pyongyang has notified Seoul that no independent solution of the Korean problems is possible as long as the US troops remain in South Korea. Most currently, the test interception of ballistic missile as a part of the US National Missile Defense (NMD) program in January 2000 caused North Korea’s claim, that it is a hostile challenge to the faithful suspension of missile test since September 1999. It is obvious that

North Korea doesn't want to lose bargaining power by a successful NMD program, which will deny the strategic value of indigenous long-range Taepo-Dong missiles.

So far, I have reviewed six main state actors and their respective basic national interests and contributions to the strategic environment on the Korean Peninsula. The next section reviews several multinational frameworks which are expected to contribute to freeing the peninsula from the last legacy of the Cold War and to bring regional stability.

Present Multilateral Frameworks for Stability in Northeast Asia

Since the end of Cold War and the bi-polar system, the world has shifted to a uni-polar or multi-polar system. The need for multilateral frameworks to maintain peace and stability in any part of the world is becoming more prevalent. The key is the establishment of a solid structure for regional cooperation, which is capable of resolving any kind of conflicts in their region, and that is what Asia is lacking now. So far, no framework has worked effectively to combine Asian countries, or has had a significant role in solving the issue on the Korean Peninsula or other conflicts in Asia. That is because there are no shared interests, concerns, and threats in Asia, which are necessary to help all countries form a solid multilateral organization. Also, another problem is that North Korea does not want to be a responsible member of such multilateral frameworks, and it is making the resolution of Korean issues more difficult.

Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN)

ASEAN is a regional organization for local cooperation established in 1967 with 5 countries: Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines and Malaysia. Although membership has grown to 10 countries (ASEAN10), unanimous decision-making and noncommittal organization goals limit its activities. In particular, ASEAN is losing its initiative since the

downfall of former Indonesian President Suharto, who was the virtual leader of ASEAN. Recently, a number of non-ASEAN states such as Japan, China, Russia, South Korea and the US have been invited to ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conferences. So far, ASEAN itself has little influence in solving the problem on the Korean Peninsula, however, it could be a cornerstone for developing advanced Asia-Pacific-wide multilateral frameworks, and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) is one answer for the new role of ASEAN.

ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)

The ARF, established in 1994, is the sole arena about security in the Asia-Pacific region today. The participants of ARF are the foreign ministers from the US, the European Committee within the EU, Japan, South Korea, China, Russia, Canada and so on, in addition to the 10 ASEAN nations. Although its objective is to promote mutual understanding and transparency as a means of preventive diplomacy, North Korea is not a participant in the ARF so far, and thus direct influence toward the Korean Peninsula by the ARF is also limited. If ARF can be developed in the future like OSCE or NATO in the Western Hemisphere, it may work to settle conflicts not only on the Korean Peninsula but also in the South China Sea and in the Kashmir province between India and Pakistan.

Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum (APEC)

APEC is a framework for regional cooperation originally designed to promote trade and investment liberalization, and economic and technical cooperation. APEC is contributing to the stability and prosperity of the Asia-Pacific region mainly from an economic aspect. For example, APEC-1999 offered a good opportunity to hold several timely and important dialogues regarding non-proliferation issues of North Korean WMD among relevant states. Thus, APEC can be a supportive framework to promote peace and stability in this region.

The Four-Party Talks

Basically, North Korea does not want to talk with South Korea or Japan, preferring instead to talk with the US and China. Therefore, the US and South Korea decided after the 1996 summit talks that South Korea, North Korea, China and the US hold the Four-Party Talks, and started a process to establish a perpetual peace agreement for the Korean Peninsula. These talks could be an ideal way to lure North Korea to the negotiating table. In addition, it could be a useful framework to deconflict the end-state of a reunified Korea among four states with high concern about the Korean Peninsula. However, because neither Japan nor Russia is involved in the Four-Party Talks, complementary communication would be required by using other arenas such as ARF and APEC, in order to achieve a peaceful end-state on the peninsula. So far, no notable agreement has been met through the talks.

Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO)

KEDO is an international organization established in March 1995 by Japan, South Korea and the US, according to the “Agreed Framework” signed between the US and North Korea in 1994. The purposes of KEDO are to provide for the financing and supply of two light-water reactor projects in North Korea, and to provide for a supply of interim energy alternatives (500,000 tons of heavy oil every year). This is a “carrot” policy in exchange for a freeze on the nuclear program, and the dismantling and removal of the suspect facilities and materials. However, North Korea has not fulfilled the obligations for many years and the process of KEDO has halted every time. And the delay of the KEDO process has given North Korea the cause not to follow its obligations. Although the non-proliferation process by KEDO is paralyzed by unreasonable North Korea’s behavior, there is no “stick” policy at the disposal of the three

supporting states. There are certain public and congressional oppositions against this weak-kneed and costly diplomacy in the US.

Part 3

The Prospect of North Korea's Future

North Korea remains in crisis. As the pressure builds on the economy, society, and military, the potential for internal collapse, instability, and leadership change is rising. Some form of significant – perhaps violent – change is likely in the next five years... Continued vigilance and readiness, for both “implosion and explosion” scenarios, is required.

— Lieutenant General Patrick M. Hughes, USA
Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, 1998

If you try to foresee the future of North Korea, there are two major possibilities: division or reunification. If there is no reunification on the peninsula, one option is maintaining present situation, even though it is so unstable, and the other is helping North Korea to become a sound country politically and economically. On the other hand, if there is reunification, one option is to make a commonwealth of single nationality and language with two different ideologies and economies, and the other is for one country to absorb the other through enormous change.

Maintaining Status Quo

Maintaining the present condition is undoubtedly the easiest option for most countries, even though South Korea and Japan are left under the threat of military actions by North Korea. So far, Japan and the US are preoccupied with the current issue of non-proliferation of WMD and missile technology, and it seems that they have not enough energy to think about post-unification Korea. Hopefully, as long as they maintain present opaque condition or “wait and see” attitude, they can gain time to think out respective new policies regarding post-reunification Korea. In addition, China and Russia are satisfied with the present condition because they can benefit

through economic cooperation with South Korea, while isolated North Korea acts as a buffer zone from the US forces in Korea.

This tendency is delaying reunification of Korea, and this situation is not preferable. It is considered that the more the reunification is delayed, the higher will be the final cost because as time goes on, North Korea will only grow economically poorer and militarily more dangerous.¹⁵ It is widely recognized that North Korea has extensive capabilities to manufacture chemical weapons and develop longer-range ballistic missiles, and that it has only a few steps to go before it is able to manufacture nuclear bombs; it might even possess several already. There is a dreadful warning that the new light-water reactors, which KEDO is providing, would be able to produce enough plutonium to arm 65 bombs a year!¹⁶ The evolution of North Korean military technology endangers not only Northeast Asian neighbors but also more distant countries through the sale of WMD. North Korea seems to have no fear of creating new threats in order to receive more cash by withdrawing or just postponing these threats. In addition, one must assume populations in North Korea are starving regardless of foreign aid, because the oil and food are undoubtedly diverted to the military and party elite.¹⁷ At least 220,000 people according to North Korean official statistics, and maybe as many as 3.5 million people, according to an estimate by a private relief organization in South Korea, have been killed by the chronic famine.¹⁸

¹⁵ Nicholas Eberstadt, "Hastening Korean Reunification" (Foreign Affairs Mar/Apr97, Vol.76), *Academic Search Elite*, on-line, EBISCOhost, 7 January 2000.

¹⁶ Christopher Cox, "US Taxpayers are Financing North Korea's Nuclear Nightmare" (Human Events, 11/26/99, Vol.55 Issue 44), *Academic Research Elite*, on-line, EBISCOhost, 25 January 2000.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Cameron W. Barr, and Kevin Platt, "N. Korea Opens Several Doors, Reaching Out To Old Foes" (Christian Science Monitor, 12/22/99, Vol.92 Issue 20), *Academic Research Elite*, on-line, EBISCOhost, 25 January 2000.

Rise of North Korea

This option is a derivative of maintaining status quo, however, the biggest difference is supporting North Korea positively so that it can become a sound country and join the international community as a responsible member like its neighbors. This end-state could be attained through opening diplomatic channels to the international community, restructuring its economy and agriculture, promoting loose Communism with more democracy and human rights, and reforming its armed force into a moderate and conventional one. In this case, China could be a good model for North Korea in terms of economy and politics. It might be possible to obtain foreign investment from Japan and the US, if North Korea gave up entire development of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles for good, and open its diplomatic channels to the international community. However, such disarmament and democratization in North Korea are not likely to happen for a while.

This option would be welcomed by Russia, China and Japan, which don't want an emergence of one big and powerful Korea. However, this option is unacceptable to South Korea, which hopes for eventual reunification of the whole peninsula as their "Manifest Destiny." Conversely, North Korea might increase its confidence for the reunification led by the North.

Reunification through Reconciliation (Korean Commonwealth)

This option is the most favorable one for South Korea. According to the "Korean National Community Unification Formula," formed in South Korea in 1989, there are three steps to be taken before unifying Korea. The first step is the stage of establishing mutual confidence through bilateral dialogues, the second step is the interim stage of the creation of a loose union, to be called the Korean Commonwealth, and the final step is making a unified democratic republic. The reason for the intermediate stage is because it is unrealistic to unify two Koreas in

a single step; they need time for reconciliation and to form a community. The Korean Commonwealth would have a number of executive and administrative organs: Council of Presidents, Council of Ministers, Council of Representatives, Joint Secretariat, and resident liaison missions. Those organs are supposed to handle issues needed before the unification: reunion of ten million dispersed family members, promoting multi-faceted exchanges and cooperation, building confidence in the military field, drafting constitution for a reunified Korea, and preparing for general elections to form a unified legislature and government. In this formula, Seoul has several preferences regarding unification: independence, peace, democracy, human rights, and a bicameral parliament.¹⁹

However, this formula lacks feasibility. It is clear that Pyongyang will almost totally reject the formula, and it will be so difficult to reunify countries which have been divided and ruled by two quite different regimes for over half a century. Pyongyang points out that the various organs of the Korean Commonwealth are most likely to be paralyzed as decision-making bodies, since neither side is likely to yield on major issues, each defending their own systems. Pyongyang sees the Korean Commonwealth as a recipe for an extension of confrontation between the two states.²⁰

Reunification through Absorption of North Korea by South Korea

The last option for the future of the Korean Peninsula is reunification through one state's absorption of the other. However, the situation of the South being absorbed by the North is less likely, since South Korea has close military ties with the US, and no one is likely to help North

¹⁹ Sharif M. Shuja, "Korean National Community Unification Formula" (Contemporary Review, Jan94, Vol. 264 Issue 1536), *Academic Research Elite*, on-line, EBISCOhost, 7 January 2000.

²⁰ Ibid.

Korea defeat the South any more. Absorption by the South requires a catalyst to occur. There are four possible patterns, which could be catalysts for this reunification:

1. Coup d'état by the North Korean Army, the same as that of Pakistan by Gen. Musharraf in October 1999, which then goes for negotiations with South Korea.
2. Civil war or large-scale rebellion, the same as that of Romania in 1989, which eliminated President Ceausescu, then asks for help to South Korea.
3. Collapse of the state and orderly transition, the same as the Soviet Union in 1991, then goes for negotiations with South Korea.
4. Inter-Korea war waged by North Korea to unify the peninsula with force, just the same as the situation in 1950.

The shortage of food, goods and energy of those years seems to be severe enough to cause the first or second pattern to happen at any moment. However, very strict media control, and charismatic existence of former (and the only) president Kim Il Sung and his successor General Secretary Kim Jong Il are preventing such a movement to occur. Yet, such a condition would not last so long, if one looks at the increasing political asylums and defections of a MIG pilot and many civilians. Then, as for the third pattern, it is not likely that Kim Jong Il would admit his and his honorable father's ideological defeat without trying a last-ditch attempt by attacking the South. Lastly, as for the fourth pattern, North Korea has rationally avoided a full-scale war so far, probably because risks seems to outweigh gains, even in the relatively advantageous period during the Desert Shield / Desert Storm in the early 1990s. However, an economic collapse and desperation might make North Korea change its mind. In that case, North Korea could fight both regular and irregular warfare with its 85,000 to 100,000 special operations force, also it could fight conventional and unconventional warfare with its WMD and ballistic missiles.²¹ Thus, even though it is the most unfavorable pattern for neighbors, the fourth pattern – another Korean

²¹ John M. Collins, *Korean Crisis, 1994: Military Geography, Military Balance, Military Options*, (Congressional Research Service, 1994), 13.

War – seems to be the most likely event to occur. It requires neighboring countries and the US to prepare for it and to take critical responses.

Part 4

Possible Outcomes of Reunification of Korea

If one remembers the case of Germany, reunification of two states with different ideology, polity, economy, and standard of life is a demanding project. It will require a long time and enormous cost until a unified state completely solves all its problems and benefits from the unification. In particular, reforming North Korea in a current desperate situation might cost much more than the case of East Germany, which was the best economy in the Eastern Bloc. On the other hand, the disappearance of one state and emergence of a new bigger nation-state will significantly change the strategic environment of Northeast Asia.

Domestic Disorder in a Reunified Korea

In spite of their enthusiasm toward reunification of divided countries and separated nation, they might not be able to celebrate their accomplishment without having to pay a certain price. And the price would include domestic disorder in several areas.

Government and its Policy

Demolishing an ideology will cause certain chaos, unless it follows sufficient education. In the case of Korea, this education can't be expected unless there is an intermediate phase before reunification, otherwise, North Koreans must adapt themselves to abrupt changes. No politician would be able to maintain his status and there would be a difficulty to find a sufficient number of capable candidates for representatives from the northern provinces. Confucianism, their common and traditional mind-set, would be a great barrier to spreading western democracy and human

rights. Therefore, it would take a long time before sound democracy would become prevalent in all local governments in the North. Until then, a reunified Korea might not be free from political disorder.

Economy

It seems that South Korea must pay extraordinary cost to reform the economy of the North. In the case of Germany, over 600 billion dollars was poured from the West into the East.²² A think-tank estimates the cost to be 250-300 billion dollars in total, even if it avoids mistakes by using lessons of Germany.²³ This amount exceeds half a year's South Korean GDP. This burden would stagnate and possibly destroy the already deteriorating economy of South Korea. Imagine if the reunification were caused by an inter-Korea war, it would destroy the infrastructure which South Korea has constructed over the last four decades, and would probably shatter the economy of South Korea, which is expected to bail out the economy of North Korea. The amount of money which would be needed to reconstruct whole the Korean Peninsula would be incalculable.

Social and Welfare

Reunification might cause social disorder due to weakened national identity, and lead to social transgressions.²⁴ One of the greatest differences from the case of Germany is a fact that the Korean people experienced a civil war, in which the people of the same nationality killed each other. The severe hatred between them would remain until they completely integrate the two Koreas. Although it may sound strange to assume such hatred within a single nationality, it

²² "Putting Korea Together Again" (Economist, 05/10/97, Vol.343 Issue 8016), *Academic Research Elite*, on-line, EBISCOhost, 7 January 2000.

²³ Amos A. Jordan, *Korean Unification* (Center for Strategic Studies and International Studies, 1993), 38.

²⁴ Ibid., 40.

could happen, if one observes traditional rivalry among politicians representing different part of South Korea.

In terms of social welfare, if a reunified Korea is to raise the quality of welfare to the level of South Korea, it will certainly cause financial problems. The situation would be worse than the case of Germany, because South Korea would have to integrate a more populous and much poorer neighbor. However, if the new government failed to manage the equalization of social welfare, it would have to expect a huge influx of people from north to south, or severe uprisings.

National Security

Simply adding the numbers in two Koreas, 1.7 million soldiers are too much for a reunified Korea, and it should be reduced to a moderate number. It also should deal with the nuclear program and other WMD. Otherwise, a reunified Korea would not be a peaceful entity, and undoubtedly it would cause a “security dilemma” between neighboring countries. At the same time, a reunified Korea could not afford financially such a large armed force. Although the reform is imperative, it would be quite difficult to achieve. It would be hard to find a job for every retiring soldier under the recent economic crisis, and if the government failed to settle this problem, there would be violent rebellions by discontented soldiers in the worst case.

It would also be hard to disseminate common military doctrine and discipline to all soldiers from the North. First of all, a reunified Korea would have to determine a new national security strategy and national military strategy. Then, it would have to integrate different systems and equipment into a new doctrine, especially the WMD and ballistic missiles of North Korea which would be big elements that would have to be considered. Until a reunified Korea succeeded in reforming its armed force, a power vacuum would exist right on the Korean Peninsula.

Change of International Relations

The reunification of Korea will be a catalyst for new international relationships in Northeast Asia. A reunified Korea would be highly competitive with Japan in all aspects and would counterbalance Japanese predominance in the region. Emergence of a too powerful Korea would not be welcomed by Japan, if it holds large armed forces with nuclear and ballistic missile capabilities, especially if it showed strong nationalism and hostility toward Japan. By the same token, if the reunification were led by South Korea, which allowed USFK to be stationed in its territory, it would cause a “security dilemma” with China and Russia. It is not likely that China and Russia would accept relocation of Korean and the US forces close to their borders.

Controversy over USFK

The US security commitment to South Korea has both legal and moral sanctions. The commander of USFK also serves as a Commander in Chief of the UN Command, responsible for maintaining the armistice agreement suspended the Korean War in 1953. There is the US-ROK Security Agreement of 1954. And, the US will keep its commitment even after reunification of Korea. The 1998 East Asia Strategy report shows an intention to maintain USFK even after North Korea is no longer a threat.²⁵ Also, President Kim Dae Jung has affirmed the value of the bilateral alliance and the US military presence even after reunification of the Korean Peninsula.

However, it is fair to assume that controversy over USFK withdrawal would occur in a reunified Korea, which might no longer be willing to rely on USFK once the threat in the North had gone. There is evidence to support this idea. The stationing of US troops in South Korea has long been a contentious issue among students and nationalists, who recognize the US as an

²⁵ “The United States Security Strategy For The East Asia-Pacific Region 1998”, *Defense Link US Department of Defense*, n.p.; online, Internet, 6 September 1999, available from <http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/easr98/>.

imperialist. A survey in 1995 found the majority of South Koreans in their 20s and 30s opposed any US troop presence in Korea. They would probably change government policy in the next 10 to 20 years.²⁶ As another sign, South Korea is making an effort to diversify its sources of arms procurement; it has obtained eighty T-80U tanks and forty BMP-3 infantry-fighting vehicles from Russia, and a number of Mistral surface-to-air missiles from France. It is now seeking to acquire a next-generation fighter from either the US (F-15E), Russia (Su-35), France (Rafale), or a European Consortium (EF2000).²⁷ Such movement is claimed by the US officials that it may degrade the inter-operability between the US and South Korean forces. In addition, South Korea has a frustration with an agreement with the US, which limits the range of its surface-to-surface missiles to 180Km, and wishes to increase the range; however, the US is unenthusiastic about that.

From a US standpoint, if South Korea could not afford to maintain its host nation support (HNS) because of the probable financial hardship after reunification, the public and congressional opposition toward maintaining USFK would become stronger. Although the HNS by South Korea has continuously climbed since 1991, that of 1999 dropped to 333 million dollars, a 16.5% decrease from the 399 million dollars in 1998, due to its economic crisis.²⁸

Once the US decided on the withdrawal of USFK, it would cause subsequent controversy over a withdrawal of USFJ. In that situation, a large-scale power vacuum would emerge in Northeast Asia, which would induce another and even larger instability among those countries which wanted to play a dominant role in place of the US. Both a reunified Korea and Japan, who

²⁶ Major James L. Miller, *USFK After the Reunification*, (School of Advanced Military Studies United States Army Command and General Staff College, 1997), 17.

²⁷ *White Paper*, Part III Chapter 2, n.p.; online, Internet, 14 February 2000, available from <http://www.mnd.go.kr/mndweb/wpe/1999/>.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, Part II Chapter 4.

have been dependent on the US forces, would strive for self-sufficient defense forces, in the worst case such efforts could culminate in the development of their own nuclear weapons.

Pros and Cons for Reunification of Korea

If one tries to foresee the possible outcomes, there are pros and cons for reunification of Korea. So far, this part has shown several negative outcomes. A reunified Korea would see a broad range of domestic disorder. At the same time, one big Korea would dramatically change the strategic environment in Northeast Asia. An emerging reunified Korea would be the great rival to Japan in all aspects. China and Russia, who would lose the buffer zone from South Korean and the US forces, would feel greater tension at their borders with a reunified Korea. The US would receive less reliance from a reunified Korea, and possible financial hardship in South Korea would cut down the level of HNS to USFK. Thus, the US might be compelled to consider the withdrawal of USFK soon after the reunification. And the withdrawal of USFK would induce severe instability in Northeast Asia.

On the other hand, reunification of Korea would bring favorable outcomes in at least four areas. First, reunification of Korea is the “Manifest Destiny” for the nation, which has been separated for half a century, and this would be a symbolic event to terminate the last remaining legacy of the Cold War. Second, the good news is that South Korea, Japan and the US would be freed from the immediate threat to their national security caused by North Korea. Third, the proliferation of WMD would be reduced to a great extent, because some rogue states and terrorists would lose the largest distributor of nuclear and missile technologies and weapons. Fourth, reunification of Korea would relieve tens of millions of North Korean people who have been suffering severe shortage of food and energy, and would restore their human rights.

Thus, even though there are several negative impacts with the reunification, the international community should promote the reunification to attain the positive outcomes. Remember, as time goes on, North Korea will only grow economically poorer and militarily more dangerous.

Part 5

Actions that must be taken before Reunification of Korea

The last part showed several negative consequences through reunification of Korea. The easiest option for most countries is to maintain the present condition and stay away from those changes. However, taking a “wait and see” attitude and overlooking North Korea striving for its desires is a dangerous option for the international community. Also it would be too costly an option for South Korea and its allies to reform North Korea after reunification. Therefore, if reunification of Korea is inevitable in the near future, it is imperative that Japan and the US prepare for it and step out with positive actions, in order to prevent an unfavorable end-state on the Korean Peninsula after reunification.

The Most Favorable End-state and the Path to Achieve

In order to plan for the actions regarding the Korean Peninsula, the most favorable end-state has to be determined. Japan wants peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula to ensure security of Japan and whole East Asia. The US shares the same end-state in this region with Japan, but also has strong interests with economic growth, democracy and human rights.²⁹

The Path to Peace and Stability of the Korean Peninsula

In this paper, part 3 described four directions for the future of North Korea: maintaining status quo, rise of North Korea, reunification through reconciliation, and reunification through absorption of the North by the South. Although the most favorable path to peace and stability is reunification through reconciliation, reunification through absorption is the most realistic path to

finally achieve peace and stability. That is because currently there is almost no chance to reach an agreed condition of unification between two Koreas, since neither of them is likely to yield its utopia plan based on its own ideology. Far from that, there is severe difficulty even in holding dialogues between them. Maintaining the status quo or the rise of North Korea are what Japan and the US have to avoid, because they are counterproductive to achieving peace and stability.

The Triggers for Reunification

There are four patterns that can trigger reunification through absorption, which turned out to be the most realistic path to peace and stability of the Korean Peninsula: coup d'état, civil war or large scale rebellion, collapse of state and orderly transition, and inter-Korea war. Of course the third pattern – reunification without bloodshed – is the most favorable options for the international community; however, to “wait and see” for Kim Jong Il to give up his autocratic rule is too passive an option. Again, early reunification is the key for safer and cheaper transition. The first two patterns will limit collateral damage to neighboring countries including South Korea, which will be responsible for reforming the North. Although those patterns look passive, Japan and the US might be able to precipitate such revolutionary movements using information instruments of power, by telling the North Koreans the value of a market economy, democracy and human rights. Nevertheless, Japan and the US have to prepare for the least favorable pattern – an inter-Korea war. It is extremely difficult to predict the behaviors of North Korea; there have been many provocative behaviors that no country perceives as rational. No one would be surprised if North Korea waged a war breaking DMZ. The US must be well prepared to end the war as quickly as possible and Japan must support it, to minimize damage to South Korean infrastructures.

²⁹ *A National Security Strategy for a New Century, December 1999* (The White House, 1999), 34.

Minimize Unfavorable Outcomes through the Reunification

Part 4 showed possible outcomes of reunification of Korea. More than a half of them are negative ones. In order to create not only a peaceful and stable Korean Peninsula, but also to generate favorable conditions after reunification, Japan and the US have to prepare proactively to minimize such unfavorable outcomes.

Prevent the Confrontation between Japan and a Reunified Korea

The very root of interstate discord between Japan and Korea mostly derives from their history of colonization, one of the most brutal periods of Korean history. And, it has been impossible for the Korean people to perceive Japan without animosity and great rivalry. Japan must continue the current diplomatic challenge to get rid of such historical hatred and excessive rivalry. While there are unresolved territorial and fishery disputes between Japan and South Korea, a future success in supporting Korean reunification would be the most likely turning point to improve the relationship between them. Conversely, if Japan fails to support the reunification, it would damage the relationship irreparably, because Japan is the most likely tool for a reunified Korea to establish and maintain cohesion between separated nations. Reunification of Korea will be a touchstone for Japan to form a peaceful environment in Northeast Asia.

Most countries in Asia, especially both Koreas, fear a revival of Imperial Japan. Japanese economy and industry, with high technology, are dominating their region and it has sound military forces, which are moderate in quantity but have up-to-date weapon systems. Even though Japan has a no-war article in its Constitution, and a lot of self-restraints/constraints by the Diet such as “Exclusively Defense-oriented Policy” and “Three non-Nuclear Principles – not possessing, not producing, and not permitting the introduction of nuclear weapons,” no country can deny the possibility of Japanese rearmament in the future. Since the “threat” is classically

defined as a combination of capability and will, it would be natural for them to perceive Japan as a threat, because Japan has visible and potential economic, political and military capabilities, while the intent of a country is usually invisible and difficult to know correctly. Therefore, Japan must make transparent its intent to coexist peacefully with its Asian brothers if it is not to be viewed as a threat. Every political and military action of Japan should be clear and rational to other countries. The increasing military CBM such as exchanges of high ranking military officials and combined exercises with Asian countries are effective means to ensure such transparency. This sincere attitude is necessary whenever Japan is going to take a leadership position in the Asian community. In particular, regarding the issue of Korea, Japan would better fully support South Korea with its “Sunshine Policy,” maintaining close bilateral communication and collaborations in order to maintain South Korea’s position as the most essential actor on the peninsula, rather than struggling for an initiative on the matter independently.

Minimize Friction with China and Russia

I mentioned in the last part that USFK should remain on the peninsula to keep stability in Northeast Asia. However, nuclear weapons should not exist on the peninsula. It is necessary to prove US forces have no nuclear weapons in a reunified Korea, in order to avoid unnecessary friction with China and Russia. It will be welcomed to realize a non-nuclear zone on the peninsula as South Korea pledged in 1992, but it will never achieved until USFK shows the non-existence of nuclear weapons or it withdraws from the peninsula. The experiment on the peninsula might work as a model case for non-nuclear zones in other part of the world, and might be helpful in building confidence between the US and China. Even after the non-nuclearization, careless relocation of South Korean and US forces could cause military tension around the borders between a reunified Korea and its neighbors. Also, involving those countries to

dialogues, which deal with Korean issues, will help to reduce misunderstanding among them. For example, Six-Party Talks, adding Japan and Russia to the current members of Four-Party Talks, will be favorable. The signing of a new friendship pact between Russia and North Korea in February 2000 can be seen as a demonstration of the Russian will to check the excessively dominant initiative of the US over the issue of the Korean Peninsula.

Settle Domestic Disorder in a Reunified Korea

Although the US is focused on North Korea's nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles, it doesn't adequately address biological and chemical weapons, which is another pressing issue for South Korea.³⁰ If it were used in an inter-Korea war, possible casualties and after-effects would cause disorder in a reunified Korea. The US would have to limit the casualties by executing preemptive counter-WMD and counter-guerrilla operations. Then, USFK could execute peace keeping operations (PKO) until the political and social disorder after reunification was stabilized. Also, it could act as a peace keeping force (PKF) to monitor disarmament of North Korean armed forces, especially dismantlement of nuclear facilities and other WMD.

Personnel of Japan Self-Defense Forces should not stand on the ground of Korea, even though they are wearing the UN "blue beret" in PKO, because it is likely to remind Korean people of bitter memories of Japanese colonialism. Nevertheless, Japan should not miss the biggest chance to improve relationship between a reunified Korea through the contribution to settle their domestic disorder. Japan should offer any kind of civilian assistance.

As for the economic disorder, there will be a lot for Japan to support in a reunified Korea. Remember that Japan gave the highest amount to shore up the South Korean economy after the severe economic crisis of 1997. Japan should help to reform the economy and infrastructures in

the North after reunification to relieve the financial burden on the South. The northern part of a reunified Korea will need investment by the South, Japan and the US for economic development.

Reform US Forces in a Reunified Korea

It is evident that USFK is necessary to maintain stability in Northeast Asia even after Korean reunification. For example, there are some Japanese who fear the Koreans to be a naturally aggressive nation, and believe USFK is needed to deter both North and South Korea from attacking Japan.³¹ If a withdrawal of USFK were to occur, it might induce a withdrawal of USFJ, and then there would emerge a big power vacuum, which many countries would rush to fill with their own power. On the other hand, it is also evident that USFK will face a severe controversy over its withdrawal from a reunified Korea soon after the reunification. If the US wants to keep its military commitment on the Korean Peninsula, as the East Asia Strategy Report of 1998 shows, it has to ease the opposition to US troops among students and nationalists in Korea. It will be difficult without reducing the basing and number of troops in a visible way. Such an opposition might derive from negative interactions between the US soldiers and the Koreans, desires for pieces of land, claims for noise and danger, and the burden sharing paid by their tax. Downsizing of USFK might reduce this opposition. In that case, the US would have to maintain its military capability through expeditionary forces.

Japan - As a Good Neighbor and Partner

Even if Japan is reluctant to see a strong reunified Korea on its doorstep, it is far better than being threatened by North Korea's madness and terror. For Japan, now is the very best time to

³⁰ Cameron W. Barr, and Kevin Platt, "N. Korea Opens Several Doors, Reaching Out To Old Foes" (Christian Science Monitor, 12/22/99, Vol.92 Issue 20), *Academic Research Elite*, on-line, EBISCOhost, 25 January 2000.

³¹ Major James L. Miller, *USFK After the Reunification*, (School of Advanced Military Studies United States Army Command and General Staff College, 1997), 20.

form stronger ties with South Korea, which is supposed to last eternally even after reunification. For this objective, Japan has to convey sincere understanding and generous assistance throughout the reunification process to restore the strained relationship with Korea. Now is the time for Japan to prepare for all possible options and to respond them properly and in a timely manner.

The United States - As the Most Influential Actor

The US is the unique state actor which has a historical responsibility to restore the order of the Korean Peninsula, a national interest to disseminate modern democracy and human rights to any other part of the world, and has sufficient instruments of power to achieve its goals. Any action toward North Korea made by the US can change the timing and configurations of the reunification. Therefore, the US has to determine the clear goal and proper strategy for the issue of Korea, and act accordingly so as not to see unfavorable end-state on the Korean Peninsula. It is important to coordinate its strategy with the interests of South Korea and Japan, and if feasible, those of China and Russia. At the moment, the US should stop North Korea's successful cycle of political blackmail and extortion with the international community. It should also not forget the pressing human rights issue. The longer the US allows General Secretary Kim Jong Il to extend his tenure, the more people will die of hunger.

Part 6

Conclusion

The objective of this paper is to foresee North Korea's problematic future, then to assess the possible outcomes of the "inevitable" reunification of Korea, in order to find some courses of action for Japan and the US, who want peace, stability, economic prosperity, democracy, and human rights on the Korean Peninsula. Almost every study shows that reunification of Korea is a question of "when and how," not "if." However, it seems that there are no countries preparing for the post-reunification era other than South Korea. Both Japan and the US have to be prepared for the reunification in advance, in order to avoid unfavorable outcomes through the reunification. Otherwise, a reunified Korea could cause a big power vacuum in Northeast Asia, or too independent a nation-state, which perceives Japan as a hostile rival, and the US as an unwelcome imperialist. What Japan and the US have to do now is to assess any patterns of Korean reunification to detect possible outcomes which are unfavorable for them, then prepare proactively to prevent those negative outcomes from happening, in order to form their common end-state – peace and stability in Northeast Asia.

Glossary

APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
CBM	Confidence-Building Measures
CONUS	Continental United States
DMZ	Demilitarized Zone
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea)
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
HNS	Host Nation Support
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
KEDO	Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization
MTCR	Missile Technology Control Regime
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NMD	National Missile Defense
NPT	Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PKF	Peace-Keeping Force
PKO	Peace-Keeping Operations
ROK	Republic of Korea (South Korea)
UN	United Nations
US	United States
USA	United States Army

USAF
USFJ
USFK

United States Air Force
US Forces Japan
US Forces Korea

WFP
WMD
WWII

World Food Programme
Weapons of Mass Destruction
World War II

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